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JOYNER, KEVIN	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

PTOL-90A (Rev. 04/07)

Office Action Summary	**Application No.** 10/684,314	**Applicant(s)** AMEDEO ET AL.
	Examiner KEVIN C. JOYNER	**Art Unit** 1797

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _3_ MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _01 February 2008_.
2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.
3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) _1-20_ is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5)☒ Claim(s) _15-20_ is/are allowed.
6)☒ Claim(s) _1-14_ is/are rejected.
7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:
1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on February 1, 2008 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. Claims 4-6 and 11-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Chitre et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,687,895).

Chitre discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising:

A product conditioning unit including of a tunnel having two pairs of parallel sidewalls and an entrance and an exit to form a conduit having a substantially quadrilateral cross-section, said tunnel subdivided into one or more consecutively aligned stages as shown in Figures 1, 3 & 4;

A plurality of pressure sealing doors (2) to seal at least one stage to form a pressurizable stage (column 5, lines 55-68);

A pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stage (column 6, lines 10-27);

A heating means for providing heating in at least said pressurizable stage of the conditioning unit, said heating means including a plurality of microwave sources (69) for creating a microwave field for heating products, said microwave sources arranged on both sides of a pair of opposing sidewalls so as to position products traveling upline to downline through said tunnel between said microwave sources (column 6, lines 62-68; column 7, lines 1-22; Figures 5-6); and

A conveyor means for transporting products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit (Figure 4). More specifically, as clearly shown in Figures 1 and 3, a tunnel is provided inside two pairs of parallel sidewalls forming a substantially quadrilateral cross section wherein said tunnel is divided into stages. As disclosed in column 6, lines 10-25, each stage is provided with a controlled gaseous environment causing a positive pressure system inside said stage, which meets the limitation regarding the pressurizing means and pressurizable stage. Furthermore, as shown in Figure 5, microwave sources (69) are provided on opposing sidewalls (121) wherein said products travel between said sources.

Concerning claim 5, Chitre continues to disclose that said tunnel comprises a plurality of stages and each of said stages has opposing parallel top and bottom walls and opposing parallel sidewalls so that said tunnel has a substantially rectangular cross section as shown in Figures 1 and 4. Regarding claim 6, Chitre continues to disclose that the system is provided with at least four stages in said tunnel (Figure 4), wherein said stages are capable of operating as a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage, and a cooling stage. More specifically, the temperature of each stage is controlled by a control panel, thus allowing for one stage to preheat the product, a second stage to heat the product, and a third stages that allows the product to cool. Controls are also provided to operate the conveyor means to transport products from one stage to the next, which allows for one of said stages to hold the product in the stage and therefore providing a holding stage as disclosed in column 5, lines 12-21. As such the limitations of claim 6 are met with respect to Chitre.

Regarding claim 11, Chitre also discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising:

A product conditioning unit including of a tunnel having one or more sidewalls, an entrance and an exit, wherein said tunnel is subdivided into one or more consecutively aligned stages as shown in Figures 1, 3 & 4;

A plurality of pressure sealing doors (2) to seal at least one stage to form a pressurizable stage (column 5, lines 55-68);

A pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stage (column 6, lines 10-27);

A heating means for providing heating in at least said pressurizable stage of the conditioning unit, said heating means including a plurality of microwave sources (69) for creating a microwave field for heating products (column 6, lines 62-68; column 7, lines 1-22; Figures 5-6);

A conveyor means for transporting products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit, or from downline to upline through said conditioning unit (Figure 4);

A temperature sensor (109) for measuring the temperature of products traveling through said tunnel; and

A controller connected to said conveyor means and said temperature sensor, said controller controlling said conveyor means to automatically move products upline or downline depending on temperature measurements of the products within the tunnel (column 5, lines 9-20). More specifically, as disclosed in column 6, lines 10-25, each stage is provided with a controlled gaseous environment causing a positive pressure system inside said stage, which meets the limitation regarding the pressurizing means and pressurizable stage.

Regarding claim 12, Chitre continues to disclose that said tunnel comprises a plurality of stages and each of said stages has opposing parallel top and bottom walls and opposing parallel sidewalls so that said tunnel has a substantially rectangular cross section as shown in Figures 1 and 4. Regarding claim 13, Chitre continues to disclose that the system is provided with at least four stages in said tunnel (Figure 4), wherein said stages are capable of operating as a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage, and a cooling stage. More specifically, the temperature of each stage is controlled by a control panel, thus allowing for one stage to preheat the product, a second stage to heat the product, and a third stages that allows the product to cool.

Controls are also provided to operate the conveyor means to transport products from one stage to the next, which allows for one of said stages to hold the product in the stage and therefore providing a holding stage as disclosed in column 5, lines 12-21. As such the limitations of claim 13 are met with respect to Chitre.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 7-10 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chitre et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,687,895) in view of Garrett (U.S. Patent No. 6,073,540).

Chitre discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising:

A product conditioning unit including of a tunnel having one or more sidewalls, an entrance and an exit, said tunnel subdivided into one or more consecutively aligned stages as shown in Figures 1, 3 & 4;

A plurality of pressure sealing doors (2) to seal at least one stage to form a pressurizable stage (column 5, lines 55-68);

A pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stage (column 6, lines 10-27);

A heating means for providing heating in at least said pressurizable stage of the conditioning unit, said heating means including a plurality of microwave sources (69) for creating a microwave field for heating products (column 6, lines 62-68; column 7, lines 1-22; Figures 5-6);

A conveyor means for transporting products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit (Figure 4). More specifically, as disclosed in column 6, lines 10-25, each stage is provided with a controlled gaseous environment causing a positive pressure system inside said stage, which meets the limitation regarding the pressurizing means and pressurizable stage.

Chitre does not appear to disclose a source of cleaning liquid; and that said stage includes at least one inlet projecting through one of said sidewalls and an outlet projecting through one of said sidewalls, said inlet connected to said source of cleaning liquid for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said pressurizable stage into the interior of said pressurizable stage, said outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drains from said stage.

Garrett discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising a product conditioning unit including a tunnel having one or more sidewalls with an entrance and an exit, said tunnel comprising of at least on stage as shown in Figures 1 & 2. Garrett continues to disclose that said stage comprises a source of cleaning liquid; and wherein said stage including at least one inlet projecting through one of said sidewalls (as shown near numeral 88 in Figure 2) and an outlet (96) projecting through one of said sidewalls, said inlet connected to said source of cleaning liquid for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said stage into the interior of said stage, said outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage (column 4, lines 55-68; column 5, lines 1-15). Said liquid with said inlet and outlet is provided in order to assist in heating and cooling a product quickly and uniformly throughout various stages of a conditioning system (column 5, lines 39-55). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system of Chitre to include a source of cleaning liquid and a stage that includes at least one inlet projecting through one of said sidewalls and an outlet projecting through one of said sidewalls, said inlet connected to said source of cleaning liquid for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said stage into the interior of said stage, said outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage in order to assist in heating and cooling a product quickly and uniformly throughout various stages in a conditioning system as exemplified by Garrett.

Concerning claim 8, Chitre continues to disclose that said tunnel comprises a plurality of stages and each of said stages has opposing parallel top and bottom walls and opposing parallel sidewalls so that said tunnel has a substantially rectangular cross section as shown in Figures 1 and 4. Regarding claim 9, Chitre continues to disclose that the system is provided with at least four stages in said tunnel (Figure 4), wherein said stages are capable of operating as a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage, and a cooling stage. More specifically, the temperature of each stage is controlled by a control panel, thus allowing for one stage to preheat the product, a second stage to heat the product, and a third stages that allows the product to cool. Controls are also provided to operate the conveyor means to transport products from one stage to the next, which allows for one of said stages to hold the product in the stage and therefore providing a holding stage as disclosed in column 5, lines 12-21. As such the limitations of claim 9 are met with respect to Chitre.

Regarding claim 10, Garrett continues to disclose a plurality of stages wherein each stage includes an inlet for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said tunnel into the interior of said stage and an outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage (Figure 5; column 5, lines 12-37). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system of Chitre to include a plurality of stages wherein each stage includes an inlet for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said tunnel into the interior of said stage and an outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage in order to assist in heating and cooling a product quickly and uniformly throughout various stages in a conditioning system as exemplified by Garrett.

Concerning claim 14, Chitre is relied upon as set forth in reference to claim 13 above. Chitre does not appear to disclose that each stage includes an inlet for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said tunnel into the interior of said stage and an outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage. Garrett is relied upon in reference to claim 7 above, wherein Garrett continues to disclose a plurality of stages wherein each stage includes an inlet for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said tunnel into the interior of said stage and an outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage (Figure 5; column 5, lines 12-37). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system of Chitre to include a plurality of stages wherein each stage includes an inlet for introducing cleaning liquid from the exterior of said tunnel into the interior of said stage and an outlet allowing cleaning liquid to drain from said stage in order to assist in heating and cooling a product quickly and uniformly throughout various stages in a conditioning system as exemplified by Garrett.

6. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Savi (U.S. Patent No. 4,342,726) in view of Chitre et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,687,895).

Savi discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising:

A product conditioning unit including a tunnel (T) having one or more sidewalls (combination of numeral 7 and numeral 48), and an entrance and an exit, (column 5, lines 5-35);

A heating means for providing heating in said stage of the conditioning unit (column 5, lines 5-10);

A conveyor means for transporting products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit (column 4, lines 30-55);

Said conveyor means including a motor (59) positioned exterior of said stage (Figure 8), a plurality of wheels (55) located within said stage (Figure 2), a plurality of shafts (57 and 61) mechanically connected to said motor and said wheels (column 4, lines 30-46), activation of said motor causing corresponding rotation of said shafts and said wheels to propel products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit (column 4, lines 35-50).

Savi does not appear to disclose that the system comprises a plurality of pressure sealing doors to subdivide and seal one or more consecutively aligned stages to form pressurizable stages; and a pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stages. Chitre discloses a conditioning system for sterilizing products comprising:

A product conditioning unit including of a tunnel having one or more sidewalls, an entrance and an exit, said tunnel subdivided into one or more consecutively aligned stages as shown in Figures 1, 3 & 4;

A plurality of pressure sealing doors (47) to subdivide and seal one or more consecutively aligned stages to form pressurizable stages (column 5, lines 55-68);

A pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stages (column 6, lines 10-27);

A heating means for providing heating in at least said pressurizable stage of the conditioning unit, said heating means including a plurality of microwave sources (69) for creating a microwave field for heating products (column 6, lines 62-68; column 7, lines 1-22; Figures 5-6); and

A conveyor means for transporting products from upline to downline through said conditioning unit (Figure 4). Chitre discloses that the plurality of pressure sealing doors to seal the stages to form a pressurizable stage is provided in order to provide stages that may operate indepently from one another (column 2, lines 53-68). The reference also discloses that the pressurizing means is provided in order to control the flow of gases in each stage (column 2, lines 60-68). Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system of Savi to include a plurality of pressure sealing doors to subdivide and seal one or more consecutively aligned stages to form pressurizable stages in order to provide stages that may operate indepently from one another, and a pressurizing means for controlling the pressure of said pressurizable stage in order to control the flow of gases in each stage as exemplified by Chitre.

Savi also does not appear to disclose that the heating means includes a series of microwave sources for creating a microwave field for heating products. However, utilizing a microwave source to create a microwave field and heat a product is commonly known in the art of sterilization. As discussed above, Chitre discloses a heating means for providing heating in at least said pressurizable stage of the conditioning unit, said heating means including a plurality of microwave sources (69) for creating a microwave field for heating products (column 6, lines 62-68; column 7, lines 1-22; Figures 5-6). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the heating means of Savi to utilize a series of microwave heating sources for creating a microwave field for heating products as exemplified by Chitre, as such is a commonly known heating means in the art of sterilization.

Regarding claim 2, Savi continues to disclose that said conveyor means as shown in Figure 8 does not include a conveyor belt or rollers projecting laterally across the interior of said tunnel.

Concerning the limitations of claim 3, Savi appears to disclose only one stage, wherein said stage is provided with a plurality of wheels (55 & 56) located within said stage (Figure 2), said wheels connected to said motor (59) by shafts (57 & 61) which project through holes formed in said tunnel sidewalls of said stages as shown in Figure 8 and disclosed with respect to claim 1 above. Savi does not appear to disclose that the tunnel includes four stages including a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage and a cooling stage. Chitre continues to disclose that the system is provided with at least four stages in said tunnel (Figure 4), wherein said stages are capable of operating as a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage, and a cooling stage. More specifically, the temperature of each stage is controlled by a control panel, thus allowing for one stage to preheat the product, a second stage to heat the product, and a third stages that allows the product to cool. Controls are also provided to operate the conveyor means to transport products from one stage to the next, which allows for one of said stages to hold the product in the stage and therefore providing a holding stage as disclosed in column 5, lines 12-21. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the system of Savi to include a plurality of stages that are capable of providing a preheating stage, a heating stage, a holding stage, and a cooling stage in order to indepently control each stage to a certain required set of conditions as exemplified by Chitre. Since Savi only provides one stage with a conveyor means as disclosed with respect to claim 1, then one of ordinary skill would provide said conveyance means in each stage in order to move said products through each stage. Therefore, the limitations concerning; each stage including a plurality of wheels located within said stages wherein said wheels are connected to said motor by shafts which project through holes formed in said tunnel sidewalls of said stage; are met with respect to Savi in view of Chitre.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments filed February 1, 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant's principle arguments are:

(a) None of the prior art references describe a conveyance system wherein shafts project through the sidewalls of the conditioning tunnel, let alone suggest a structure wherein shafts project through the sidewalls of a pressurizable stage as claimed by Applicant. The prior art also does not illustrate a motor exterior to a pressurizable stage. The conditioning tunnel of Chitre is far different than a pressurizable stage as practiced by Applicant and thus it does not appear to have any significant sidewalls. Finally, the shafts of Savi do not project through the sidewalls of a conditioning tunnel.

Chitre clearly discloses a conditioning tunnel having sidewalls (referenced as numeral 39 in Figure 3), wherein the tunnel comprises a plurality of stages (11) with doors (2) and wherein a gas is provided in said stages through perforated tubes (127).

Said gas is provided in order to vent the stages through exhaust flues (65). Thus, each stage is sealed from one another and is provided with a positive pressure creating pressurizable stages as shown in Figure 4. The apparatus as shown by Savi in Figures 1-9 is directed to **one single apparatus** wherein certain elements are omitted to clearly show other elements in the system. As noted clearly by Figure 7, the enclosing structure is in evidence. The hood (48) is connected to the flanks (7) creating a tunnel as shown in Figure 7. The Applicant may contend that the flanks are merely frames that do not enclose the entire structure, however as shown in Figures 1 & 3, the flanks run the entire length of the conditioning system. Therefore, the combination of Figure 7 and Figure 3 provides evidence of sidewalls that enclose the entire conditioning system. As shown in Figure 8, the motor (59) is outside of the tunnel wherein a shaft 57 is inserted from outside the tunnel and is shown inside the tunnel. Thus, the shafts must be projected through a hole in the sidewall of the tunnel in order to be exposed inside the tunnel.

(b) None of the prior art references suggest a conditioning system in which the pressurizable stage has a rectangular cross section.

As disclosed in Figures 1, 4 and 6, Chitre provides a stage with a rectangular cross-section. As described above, Chitre also discloses pressurizable stages.

(c) Applicant has amended claim 4 to include the limitation that microwave sources are arranged on both sides of a pair of opposing sidewalls so as to position

products traveling upline to downline through the tunnel between the microwave sources. This construction is not suggested in the prior art.

With reference to Figure 6 of Chitre, microwave sources (69) are provided on both sides of a pair of opposing sidewalls (121) so as to position products traveling upline to downline through the tunnel between the microwave sources. Therefore, Chitre discloses that the sources are on opposite sides of the stage, wherein when the product is in the middle of the stage, it is situated between the microwave sources.

(d) Claim 11, includes the limitation that the conditioning tunnel includes a controller connected to the conveyor and temperature sensor so that the controller can automatically move products upline or downline depending on temperature measurements made by the temperature sensor. The fact that a controller is capable of being programmed to perform a function is not an appropriate rejection wherein there is no suggestion within the prior art that the controller contains such programming.

As disclosed in column 5, lines 13-21, a controller with a corresponding control panel is provided for regulating the temperature of each microwave cavity and for monitoring the condition of the cavity and the temperature of the objects being heated. Column 11, lines 1-68 disclose that the system determines the temperature of the product and sets a time in accordance with the temperature, wherein the system provides the conveying means to move the product according to the set time. As disclosed in column 11, lines 63-68, the system is provided with a master control circuit and automatic function. Therefore, the limitations of the claim are met by Chitre.

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 7-10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Applicant's principle arguments are:

(e) None of the cited references suggest the Applicant's claimed invention that the tunnel includes a source of cleaning liquid and an inlet and outlet for the receipt and release of cleaning liquids.

The argument is moot in view of the new grounds of rejection.

9. Applicant's arguments see pages 19 and 20, filed February 1, 2008, with respect to claims 15-20 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejection of claims 15-20 has been withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

10. Claims 15-20 are allowed.

11. The following is a statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter: None of the prior art (namely Ruozi (U.S. Patent No. 6,039,991), Chitre et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,687,895) or Savi (U.S. Patent No. 4,342,726)) disclose, suggest, or provide motivation to comprise;

A conditioning system comprising a plurality of stages including a plurality of pressure sealing doors, and a heating means as well as a conveyor as disclosed in claim 14; with

A controller that automatically moves a microwave field depending on the temperature measurements of the products within the field.

Chitre discloses a conditioning system that is capable of altering the power of a microwave source in accordance with the temperature measurements of a product. However, as discussed by the Applicant in an Interview filed November 29, 2007, the altering of power to a microwave source would merely reduce the amplitude of the microwave field and not move or create a larger/smaller microwave field.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to KEVIN C. JOYNER whose telephone number is (571)272-2709. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gladys Corcoran can be reached on (571) 272-1214. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Leigh McKane/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797

KCJ